

REMARKS

Applicants' attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given to this case. The matters raised in the Office action are discussed below in the same order as presented by the Examiner.

Applicants' acknowledge the Examiner's comments in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the action.

In reply to paragraph 3, it is not believed that it is appropriate to mark Fig. 3 as "Prior Art". Fig. 3 actually illustrates the adjustable width of the drawing slot 10. To that end, Fig. 3 is to be amended to include adjustment device 10a as shown in red in the informal copy of Fig. 3. There is also submitted a formal copy of Fig. 3 including this change. Support for the showing of the adjustment device 10a is found in the original specification at page 6, lines 23 - 25 (substitute specification page 6, lines 14-17), page 7, lines 26 - 29 (substitute specification page 7, lines 9-14), page 9, lines 26 - 34 (substitute specification page 8, lines 39-47), page 12, lines 4 - 6 (substitute specification page 10, lines 40-42), original claim 4, and claim 12.

In reply to paragraphs 4 and 5, a substitute specification is submitted together with a copy of the original specification with the changes noted thereon.

The substitute specification includes appropriate subject headings as requested. In addition, the text has been amended to conform it with U.S. practice and idiomatic English. The substitute specification does not include new matter.

In reply to paragraph 6, claim 16 has been cancelled in favor of independent claim 17 which embodies the substance of original claim 16. In addition, dependent method claims 17 - 20 have been added. For the reasons indicated by the Examiner, it is submitted that claims 17-20 are in condition for allowance.

It is requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the claims under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,820,142 to Balk. Claim 9 has been amended to include that the narrow chamber of the suction device has an adjustable width as originally presented in claims 4 and 12. As particularly discussed at page 9 (substitute specification page 8), modification of the width (F) of the slot 10 during operation makes it possible to adjust the flow rate of air streams and, consequently the fineness of the count which it is desired to achieve and facilitates the start-up operation. Thus, this is an advantageous feature of the present

invention. This feature is not taught or suggested by Balk.

For the same reasons as indicated above with respect to Balk, it is requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the various claim rejections set forth in paragraphs 11 - 20. None of the prior art cited includes a suction chamber slot or narrow chamber having an adjustable width as set forth in the claims.

For the Examiner's convenience, it is noted that the preamble of claim 21 corresponds with original claim 1. Claim 21 further recites the adjustable width feature in terms of the suction slot. Claim 21 is allowable for the same reasons discussed above.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 9 - 21 presently of record are in condition for final allowance and such action is requested.

If there are any further fees required by this amendment not covered by an enclosed check, or if no check is enclosed, please charge the same to Deposit Account No. 16-0820, Order No. 34052.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Joseph J. Corso, Reg. No. 25845

1801 East Ninth Street
Suite 1200
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-3108
(216) 579-1700

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Application No. 10/009,133
Amendment dated January 20, 2004
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Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

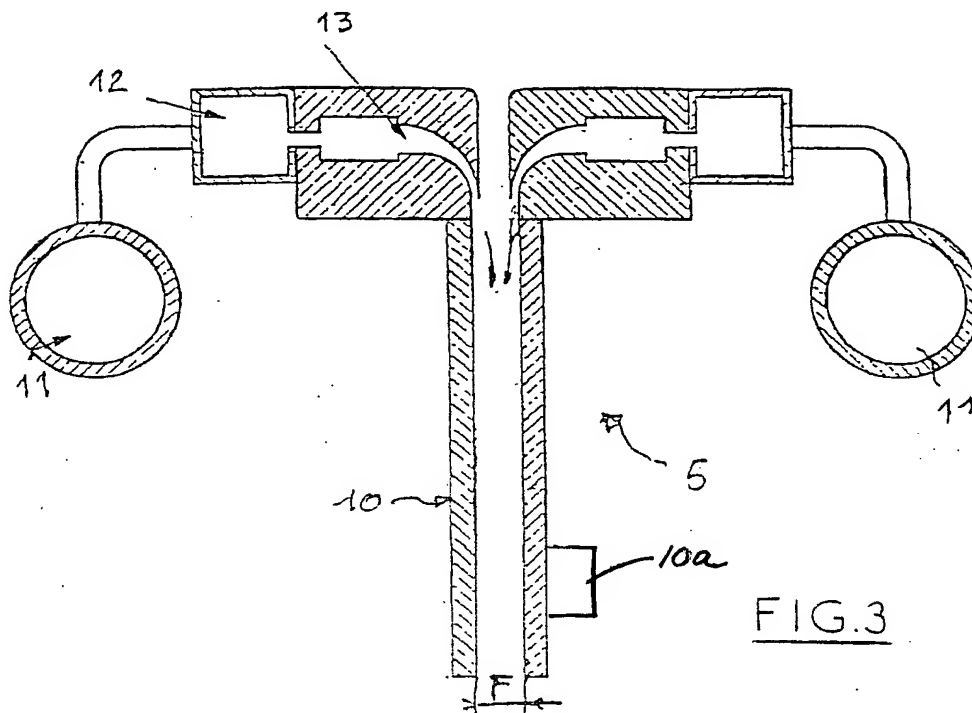


FIG. 3

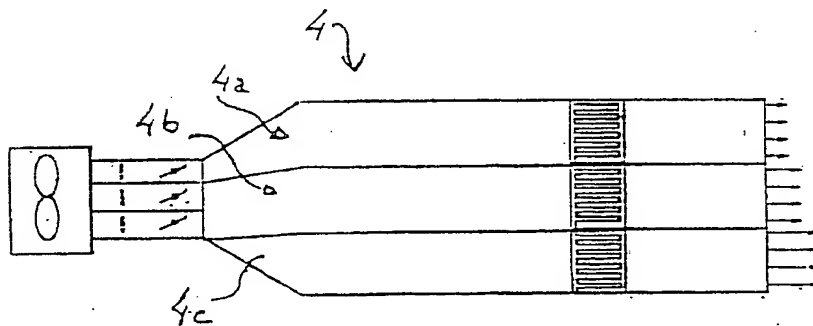


FIG. 2